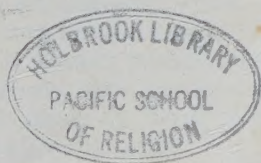


Church and Trade Unions in Germany

Written for the
General Commission
of Trade Unions of
Germany

by Dr. A. Erdman

Member of the German Reichstag



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Church and Trade Unions in Germany

By Dr. A. Erdmann, Member of the German Reichstag

The labour movement in some of the European countries is not always united. In some of them, especially in Germany, we find a so-called Christian Labour Movement existing quite apart from the general or socialist labour movement. Representatives of the Catholic Church and of the clerical party, which is known in Germany as the Centre or "Centrum" Party (their representatives have formerly sat in the "centre" of the Reichstag), are collectively responsible for the formation of this secessionist movement. Efforts have of late been made to establish a similar movement in the United States of America and in other countries. Certain spokesmen of the clerical party, of which Mr. Giesberts for instance, who is a member of the Centre Party in the Reichstag, is one, have indeed been actively engaged in such a campaign in the United States with a view to preparing public opinion and to inducing the workers to a move in the direction prescribed by them. Certain preparations have been completed since and will some day be followed by the formation of Social Circles and christian labour organisations. The facts mentioned are probably responsible for the great number of inquiries which have reached the „Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands“ (the national centre or federation of German trade unions) from all parts of the United States, asking for information respecting the Christian Trade Unions in Germany. Will therefore all these inquirers and others interested in the question, kindly accept the following series of short articles, covering the history, the work, and programme of the christian unions, in the most accurate and brief manner possible, as a reply. Our statement, however, deals exclusively with the labour movement run by the catholics, as the efforts made by the protestants have not met with any success worth mentioning here.

The catholic church in Germany, at a comparatively early stage, commenced to give attention to the workers. The Catholic Journeymen's Association was established immediately after the 1848 revolution in Germany. The founder of this organisation was a catholic priest, named Kolping, who had two principal aims in view: to improve the material and social position of the journeymen

and, at the same time, keep them away from the lively political movement of that period and protect them against the possible renunciation of the catholic faith. The Catholic Journeymen's Association, which only embraces skilled trades, is still in existence. Some of its particular features are: Journeymen's Homes, technical schools or evening classes, social instruction classes, etc. All these institutions have been carefully developed, their scope and influence extending over quite a considerable portion of the catholic journeymen. The Association is entirely under the control and supervision of the catholic clergy. The General President of the Association, who has his headquarters in Cologne, is appointed by the Archbishop of that city, and all the executive officers of the many locals are priests. Their election to the position of local President has, in every case, to be sanctioned by the Bishop. The Catholic Journeymen's Association maintains the best of relations with the masters, never taking part in any industrial movement. Its programme expressly excludes politics, but everybody knows that the members are constantly being trained to support the Centre Party. The total membership of this Catholic Journeymen's Association, including branches in Austria and Switzerland, amounts to about 80 000.

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It was early in the sixties of last century that Lassalle brought the German socialist movement into being. The catholic clergy soon afterwards again took up the question of labour, the number of wage earners having begun to grow rapidly owing to the rapid development of modern industries. Bishop Ketteler of Mayence shared many of those views enjoyed by Lassalle in relation to economic and social problems. It was owing to his influence that numerous younger clergymen mixed with the working people, preaching the gospel of social salvation. The formation of Catholic Working Men's Societies was started all over the country, aiming, not only at the organising of the skilled journeymen, but of the industrial workers, the real and new proletariat, as well. These Working Men's Societies were very radical in the sixties and seventies, not only in regard to the political movement but in their social and economic demands as well. In the more advanced industrial districts, in and around Aix-la-Chapelle and Essen for instance, they were very soon engaged in bitter disputes with the gentlemen of the church and of the Centre Party. Being, however, too weak, to build up an independent christian-social labour movement out of their own organisation, they came more and more under the influence of the Centre Party, being put on a political track of the most reactionary nature. This tendency first displayed itself during the eighties and has been noticeable ever since. The object of these Catholic Working Men's Societies, according to their own programme, is to afford their members "a religious-christian and social education". These societies are conducted by catholic priests who,

being themselves followers of the Centre Party, take very good care to have their pupils educated in the interest of that party. Great efforts are being made that above all every individual member may become an avowed enemy and antagonist of the socialist labour movement. Any leaning towards socialism or towards a free or independent trade union, means instant expulsion from such societies. The same fate awaits members who are found to have subscribed to a socialist paper. The whole of these societies form three different federations: the Western German, the Southern German and a third federation with headquarters in Berlin. The latter federation maintains its own views in regard to certain social problems and, therefore, is constantly at deadly war with the other two groups. Their combined membership is about 480 000.

Before continuing our sketch of the christian labour movement, we ought to point to a particularly interesting fact which will be of use in explaining some of the perplexing problems dealt with on these pages. I refer to the intimate relations which exist between church and political party, such as is to be found only in Germany, where the Catholic Church and the Centre Party are most closely allied. The Centre, this is the name commonly used when referring to the German clerical party, was established immediately after the German Empire had been formed, that is in 1871, the new party professing to represent the catholic population of the empire. The catholics are in the minority in Germany, for about two-thirds of the population adhere to the Protestant or Lutheran faith, the catholics forming only one third of the population. It is a fact that the interests of the catholics, especially in Prussia, had oftentimes been neglected. The catholic members of parliament, consequently, joined hands in the Centre Party in order to make similar occurrences impossible in future and in order to fight the attacks made upon the catholic church by Bismarck and by the liberal parties since the empire had been established. It was under these conditions that the intimate connection between church and political party was brought about, a remarkable mixture of religious and political interests, to which we generally apply the term clericalism. The Centre Party, in Parliament, stood up for the interests of the catholic church, fought all attacks made upon same and has ever since been eagerly striving to increase the influence of the church where the people, and especially the board schools are concerned. The catholic church, on the other hand, placed the enormous power of its funds and an army of priests at the disposal of the Centre, thereby driving the followers of the church into the political fold of the Centre. This is done to such an extent that the catholic priest in Germany at the present time, expends about a quarter of his time and energy on behalf of the church, while three-quarters of his time are taken up by political propaganda and by educational work among the masses on behalf of the Centre.

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This co-operation of church and Centre has been especially in evidence in all matters affecting the labour movement. Both are in need of the great mass of the people. The great masses of the people are indispensable to both parties and since same consist chiefly of working folk, in modern and industrialised countries, it appears absolutely necessary to take up the question of labour, in order that the wage earner might be attracted and organised thereby. It is, furthermore, quite natural, that the labour movement run by the clerics should be opposed to the socialist labour movement, for the great masses of the population have, in Germany, very successfully been organised by the social-democrats. As a matter of fact the christian labour movement in Germany is merely a new weapon forged by the clerics for the sole purpose of arresting the growth, and obstructing the path of socialism and the modern labour movement, and to keep the faithful worker in their own ranks.

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It has been shown in our previous articles that the first efforts of German clericalism at organising the catholic workers, have been made in connection with the political movements of the times. The Catholic Journeymen's Association, for instance, was formed immediately after the 1848 revolution, and the formation of the Catholic Working Men's Societies followed as a result of a new awakening of political life in Germany early in the sixties or, at the same time as Lassalle formed the social-democratic labour party. There is a third branch of the clerical labour movement, the Christian Trade Unions, which also had its origin in an important political event.

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The socialist movement in Germany grew rapidly in the seventies of last century, the socialist vote and the membership of the trade unions went up by leaps and bounds and this caused the Reichstag, upon the advice of Bismarck to pass the notorious Anti-socialist Law. Under this law every kind of organisation, no matter whether it was political or trade union organisation, was broken up at once. Their papers and journals were suppressed, their meetings were prohibited and socialist propaganda work was brutally put a stop to all over the country. The German labour movement was made to suffer for fully twelve years under this law, without, however, the desired end having been attained. All that could not be done publicly during these trying times, was carried on secretly. Never has a class of men worked more zealously and with such good hope and faith in their cause as did the German workers while this anti-socialist law was in force in our country. The law was finally repealed in 1890. At the Reichstag elections that were held in the same year, the Social-democratic Party polled

nearly 1 500 000 votes. In fact, it had become the strongest political party in the Land. The trade unions, too, had shown splendid signs of activity during the latter years of the regime of the anti-socialist law. After the downfall of that infamous law, they mustered a very respectable membership in spite of all persecutions and obstacles that had been put in their way.

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This evidence of vitality and progress on the part of the socialist labour movement made the Centre Party look into the problem more closely. This party had not worried in the least about the workers during the twelve years that the social-democratic movement had been tied up by a special law. But they immediately started to make preparations by means of which their faithful followers were to be protected against the prospective propaganda work of the socialists, as soon as their foe had been unchained. Windthorst, the famous leader of the Centre Party at that time, suggested that a "People's Union for Catholic Germany" be established. This organisation has since become the central point (rallying point) for everything connected with the christian labour movement. This society has since taken the initiative in establishing the Christian Trade Unions. The People's Union for Catholic Germany may be of particular interest since a similar organisation has, for some time, been planned for the United States. Certain preparations to that end have already been made.

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The Catholic People's Union, as this organisation is commonly called, has its headquarters in Muenchen-Gladbach, an industrial centre in the Rhine province. The union has two main objects, viz., to keep the mass of the catholic population within the church, and, at the same time, assure their allegiance to the Centre Party. There is no doubt that this organisation furnishes the most perfect example of the political and religious duplicity of clericalism. Leaders of the Centre Party and catholic priests are at the head of the organisation, while all of its literary and propaganda work is being carried on with equal zeal by priests and laymen who are as loyally attached to the church as to the political party. The Catholic People's Union numbers about 750 000 members whose annual subscription amounts to one mark (1s. or 25 cents). This money permits of an enormous amount of work being done, such as the publication of books, pamphlets, organisation of courses of social lectures for workers, tradespeople, farmers and government officials, meetings, formation of special organisations for juveniles, for workers and for women workers, establishing of permanent offices and of labour secretariats or offices of legal advice, and training of special workers for their cause. The future activity of the latter

is naturally centered in the work of the Centre Party and the christian labour movement including, of course, the christian trade unions. As a matter of fact, the Catholic People's Union is the backbone of German clericalism in all its work, no matter whether political, social or defensive. From the point of view of its followers, it is, indeed, a model institution.

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Mere warnings against socialist seduction or the propaganda carried on by the Catholic People's Union by means of meetings and literature, however, did not seem to have sufficient effect. Apart from their religious and political ideas the catholic workers had to defend their economic interests as well. They were constantly advised by government officials and by their clerical leaders to practice modesty, and renunciation of worldly pleasures, but all this could not prevent them from feeling the necessity of working shorter hours for better pay and the need for trade union organisation. Some of them joined the socialist unions and appeared to feel quite at home in their midst. In view of the progress constantly made by the socialist movement there was every reason to believe that the number of catholics joining these unions would continue to grow, that their class-consciousness would be strengthened, that they would adopt modern ideas and, perhaps, would forget all about priests and laymen.

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The Centre Party was well aware of these dangers and provisions were immediately made to counteract same. Soon after the downfall of the anti-socialist law, a lively discussion took place in the Centre Party press as to the ways and means to be devised in order to prevent the catholic working man from being influenced by the socialist trade unions and, consequently, being finally converted to socialism. Quite a number of propositions were made on the subject. It was suggested first that the catholic workers should join the socialist trade unions in such numbers, as would outnumber their opponents and, thereby, secure the permanent rule of the christian spirit and ideas within these organisations. This suggestion, however, was soon given up, as it was recognised that the christian workers would be more likely to be converted by their socialist co-workers than vice-versa. The next plan discussed, that of establishing sub-sections for the different trade groups in the Catholic Unions, was put forward in order that the trade union interests of the catholic worker might be safeguarded. It was further proposed to establish trade unions on a catholic basis, which should act conjointly with similar organisations of the protestant persuasion, in the case of wages movements, or any of the more important actions. At last it was proposed to found trade unions for all those

workers of religious belief, both catholics and protestants, and from which only socialists should be excluded.

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The variety of the proposals made gives some idea of the difficulties with which the "Centre" was confronted. It was recognised that something must be done to satisfy the growing demands of the catholic worker, but the "Centre" would neither refer them to the socialist unions, nor establish a strike organisation of its own. With such a plan the catholic employers could not bring themselves to agree, as same would have the effect of awakening the independence and class consciousness of the workers. Such a variety of attempts were made by the "Christian" trade unions, that by 1900 same provided a most kaleidoscopic representation of cross purposes and conflicting issues. After long and bitter disputes the Catholics played what they thought must be the winning card; this was no more nor less than the inter-denominational system, under which a union should be formed accepting both catholics and protestants into its folds.

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The catholic politicians chose this form of organisation, in order to gain the support of the protestant workers, and to allay any suspicion that same may be out and out Catholic. At any rate they were not afraid that the protestant influence would overcome that of the catholic in the organisation. The protestant church had not such a hold over its workers as the catholic; the protestant workers, as far as politics are concerned follow their own inclinations. It was a foregone conclusion that the number of protestant workers joining the "Christian" unions far from increasing would become proportionately smaller. And that is what happened. Not a tenth part of the members of the "Christian" unions are protestants; nine-tenths are catholics and typical "Centre" men. The name "Inter-denominational" is only a cloak thrown over an organisation as catholic as anything that has ever hailed from the Vatican. The "Christian" organisations have been established by the "Centre" for the purpose of defending the latter against the Socialistic Workers' Movement.

The fighting of socialism, both as regards politics and trade unionism was put to the members as one of their special duties, and the Centre of the Catholic Unions in Muenchen-Gladbach focussed its attention upon this point, appointing fully trained christian agitators and secretaries, well equipped with the necessary weapons, for the fighting of the socialistic organisations in this district. This is the way in which the religions fanaticism in the catholic worker was kindled. They were not taught to judge the socialist unions according to what they had accomplished on behalf of the workers, but rather to look upon same as men disowning any allegiance to their native land, and above all as enemies of religion; in this way were calumny and prevarication allowed to usurp the fair place of truth.

Reference was naturally made to the class struggle of the socialist organisations, and same was abominably misrepresented, as though it were just a fight for the sake of fighting, and a plot to goad on the workers to misery. On the other hand, the christian organisations, at the instigation of their leaders emphasised the peaceful character of their movement. They gloried in the modesty, the placability of their attitude towards the employers, and extolled the governing classes, as the saviours of the workers, from the greedy clutches of the socialist workers' movement. Those were the principles upon which "Christian" trade unions were established and conducted. Those were the principles, or rather lack of principles, with which the leaders hoped to secure the greater part of the non-organised labour of Germany as recruits. But time told another story. There was no great flocking of members to the "Christian" organisations, even among the workers of avowed religious belief, in spite of all the efforts of the catholic priests, the leaders, and the paper of the "Centre" press to draw the catholic workers into the organisations. The christian unions, it is true, increased their membership during the course of the year, but the socialist unions increased their membership by 100 000, to the "Christian" union's 10 000. If the meek christian lambs increased by one head, the socialistic dragons increased by 10. The healthy mind of the German worker was not to be turned, either by the slander of the clerics, or by their pious admonishments or etherial promises. The members of the "Christian" unions had been brought up in modesty and submission, and were given to understand that such virtues go much farther with the employers and the law givers, than the class struggle. But they soon discovered their mistake, much to their disappointment. The employers did not enquire about the modesty and meekness with which the demands of the workers had been submitted. Upon the workers asking for higher wages or a reduction in the working time, they were refused these concessions, their organisations were oppressed, and their members victimised, even as in the case of the socialist organisations. As the members of the "Christian" unions had no desire to pay their subscriptions for nothing, they forced their leaders to take up stern measures, and so, through force of circumstances, they were compelled to tread the path of the class struggle. The further result of this was that the attitude of the "Christian" unions to the socialistic unions underwent a material change. The "Christian" trade unions were too weak in numbers as well as financially, to enter upon an independent wages movement. If anything was to be done it could only be done by amalgamating with the strong socialist unions. So we see in many cases since 1911 both organisations working together, and it must be admitted that the "Christian"² unions have conducted themselves very creditably and soberly. Judging by how things are shaping, the possibility of both organisations amalgamating is not so very remote. The Herr Giesberts whom we have mentioned, once said that the purpose of the "Christian" unions was, at any rate, not to oppose socialistic organisations. If

the organisations are still separate affairs, the one aim, that of rallying the workers around one common leadership will not be lost sight of for one moment.

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This leaning towards radicalism anything but pleased the catholic fathers and founders of the "Christian" trade unions, nor the "Centre". The followers of that party consist chiefly of workers, small farmers, and artisans; but their representatives in Parliament consist of great landlords, employers, and highly placed officials; members of the nobility and church dignitaries; men who, with barely an exception, have not the remotest idea of the requirements of the working classes, nor the least inclination to further the interests of same. The catholic manufacturers and artisans, who have a loud voice in the "Centre" Party, look upon the "Christian" trade unions as destroyers of the economic peace of the workers, and the pioneers of socialism. The "Centre" Party is, in its present state, above all a through and through conservative one, a sworn enemy of progress, and opposed to anything calculated to bring about the social and political uplifting of the working classes.

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Now there are certain people in the leadership of the "Centre" Party who, for political reasons, hold out a protecting hand to the "Christian" unions. In certain parts of Germany, in the industrial West, for instance, the "Centre" finds itself hard pressed by the social-democrats. The "Centre" has every reason to keep its people well in hand in the West of Germany, and to make certain of the Catholic workers' organisations. Having regard to this fact, the "Christian" unions still find in the "Centre" a strong support. The "Centre" has, as a matter of fact, actually gone so far as to assist certain of the "Christian" trade union leaders to the securing of seats in Parliament.

The number of these trade union leaders is carefully worked out—at present there are six of them among the ninety members of the "Centre" Party—and the men very carefully selected, thus dispelling all fears of their upsetting the policy of antagonism-to-the-workers indulged in by the "Centre". That was a sly move on the part of the "Centre" Party; it satisfied the ambition of the "Christian" trade union leaders, placed them under the heel of the "Centre" Party, and worked upon the "Christian" organisations through their leaders, so that the former like the latter became indissolubly allied to the Clerical Party. The "Christian" trade unions have again thrown off the radical convictions which had so long influenced and guided same. Under the pressure brought to bear upon them by the "Centre" and—I will deal with this later—the Church, they have completely rounded on the socialist organisations and look upon it as their duty to conduct a life and death

campaign against same. They are giving themselves up, body and soul, to the policy of reaction under the leadership of the party to which they belong. Nothing is further from the truth than the statement on the part of the "Christian" trade unions, that they are politically neutral organisations. The eternal fight against the Socialist Party, which they conduct in word and deed, is a proof to the contrary. That which they call "Political neutrality" is nothing more nor less than political temperance in order not to disturb the policy of antagonism-to-the-workers upheld by the "Centre". The "Christian" organisations do not stir themselves when questions touching the economic life of the worker are brought up for discussion in Parliament, such as import duty and tax questions; they do not stir themselves because they have not the courage to represent the interests of the workers in defiance of the "Centre" Party.

But they allow their representatives, as members of Parliament, to be party to the damaging policy of the "Centre" and Conservatives, which aims only at the mulcting of the masses, and the depriving of them of their common rights. The antagonism displayed towards the Socialist Party, and the relationship existing between the Conservative and the Clerical Parties, knocks the fairy tale of "Political neutrality" in the head. The leaning of the "Christian" trade unions towards the class struggle, and their sympathy with the Socialistic Labour Movement, was not so much objected to by the Centrum as by the Church. It must be remarked that the more strictly ecclesiastic factions among the German Catholics, were, from the outset, opposed to the establishment of the "Christian" trade unions. The very fact of combining with the protestants seemed, in itself, to constitute a great menace to the salvation of the Catholic worker. The advanced catholics took umbrage at the fact that in the "Christian" unions, christianity was often referred to in its broad sense, drawing no denominational distinctions, but rather treating both religions as having principles in common with each other. According to the Catholic faith, there is only one religion in Christendom, and that the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church being looked upon as an apostacy from this church. The resistance offered by the strict Catholic body grew as the "Christian" trade unions associated themselves with the movements of the socialist unions; as they steered more and more towards the independent labour movement, and came out with the demand to manage the economic questions concerning their members, to their own liking and upon their own responsibility, and to lay aside all spiritual advice and meddling.

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The advanced Catholic body then drew the attention of the Bishops to the new movement, and these ecclesiastics sent out a

notice to the clerics in 1900, in which the "Christian" unions were described as organisations running counter to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and therefore quite unsuitable for the Catholic worker. If Catholic workers wanted to look after their economic interests, they might form sections for the different callings in their unions, through which they might act—under the guidance of an ecclesiastical management—for the betterment of their worldly lot. That was the long and short of the judgement passed upon the "Christian" trade unions by the German Bishops. Since the condemnation of the "Christian" unions by the Bishops, the strict Catholics have strained every nerve for the establishing of the trade sections prescribed. Strict Catholic trade union movements were conducted parallelly with the "Christian" trade union movements, the Catholics boasting that they were working in complete harmony with the doctrines of the Church and the injunctions of the Pope, to a Divine end. This movement was entered upon in the most determined manner, as those conducting same were assured of the approval and favour of the highest of the ecclesiastical authorities, and the zeal with which the attacks upon the "Christian" unions were carried out was really worthy of a better cause. This movement was characterised by the irrationality of the utterances of its leaders, whilst no great results were secured. It was unreasonable in its principles and fruitless in its efforts, but same was only the natural result of that which the "Christian" trade unions had left unfinished. If the claims set forth in the Catholic program—that the economic questions of the workers can only be solved through the observation of the articles of the Catholic faith—are correct, then the conclusion drawn by the Catholic trade unionists—that the trade union activities of the Catholic workers could only meet with success through the closest combination with the Catholic Church—are justified, as there can be only one religion for the Catholic, and that the Catholic religion. The absurdity of the pure Catholic Trade Union Movement is apparent everywhere where religion becomes mixed up with politics and trade unionism. The two sections of the Catholic Trade Union Movement have fought each other up to the present in the most vigorous manner. Each section has tried its best to win the greater favour in the eyes of the Bishops and the Pope, and wherever possible to bring about the destruction of its opponent; each claiming to be endowed with the highest authority. This furnishes still another example of the insincerity and dishonourableness of the "Christian" trade unions. In their programs they state that they are organisations, independent of either political or clerical party. If that were so, where would be the necessity of worrying about the fault-finding and the attacks of the Catholic Party? where the need to worry themselves about obtaining the favour of the Pope? why place so much value upon being recognised by the Church, and take it so much to heart if condemned by same? No!! the "Christian" trade union are not independent of the Catholic Church. Their leaders have to look to their guns, as members of

the Catholic Party in the "Centre", that they do not run foul of the Church, on account of political reasons, and the "Christian" trade unions have to rely upon the favour and support of the ecclesiastical authorities to such a degree that they are lost the moment the Church withdraws its protecting hand, or raises a hand against them.

One can, therefore, easily understand the efforts made by the "Christian" trade unions to ward off the attacks made by their stricter Catholic brethren, the Bishops, and the Pope. In this direction, however, they are not very fortunate. The present head of the Catholic Church is a disciple of pure belief and subjection; those workers of the Catholic trade unions, therefore, pleased him the better. The Pope praised them upon every possible and impossible occasion, and expressed himself in most glowing terms upon their "principles and singleness of action". Upon the other body approaching him, he gave them some friendly and fatherly words of advice, which, however, sounded suspiciously like an exhortation to obedience, and to the following of the way prescribed by the Church. The Pope became more and more friendly disposed towards the Catholic trade unions, and less and less friendly disposed towards the "Christian" unions. The quarrel between the two religious unions assumed more and more alarming dimensions, and penetrated right into the vitals of the German Catholics. Then, after a long deadlock, came the decision of the Pope, in the form of the "Encyclical *Singulari quadam*".

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It is well known that the Pope has forbidden the movement called the "Christian Democratic Movement" in Italy, even as the same movement (Sillonism) was forbidden in France. Those taking part in this movement were good Catholics who had promised to obey the Pope in all matters of the Faith, but who claimed a certain independence and latitude in their economic and socialistic movements. The Pope demanded that these movements should be conducted under the direction of the Church, and as the organisations would not give up their independence the movement was forbidden. The strict Catholic body predicted that a similar fate would overtake the "Christian" unions, and there is no doubt that the Pope had had the intention to forbid the "Christian" unions. This intention would certainly have been put into action, had it not been for the intervention of certain influential members of the Church in Germany, of certain Bishops, and of the Government itself.

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Pope Pius X. in his encyclical relating to trade unions, expressed himself in favour of the principle of pure Catholic trade unions,—such unions to work together in constant harmony with the

Church,—as being the ideal organisation for the Catholic worker. He is willing, however, having regard to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Germany, to countenance mixed unions—that is unions for both Catholics and Protestants—where the Bishops think advisable. These trade unions—approved of by the Bishops, and countenanced by the Pope—must, however, be prepared to put up with the same amount of interference and meddling as the pure Catholic organisations. They must, further pledge themselves to carry out the instructions of the Bishops, concerning the fundamental principles and line of action of their organisations, to the letter. Condemned in principle by the Pope, tolerated, but subject to peremptory recantation, and to the jurisdiction of the Bishops, such is the present state of the “Christian” trade unions. And the leaders and members of these unions, have they conducted themselves as workers and as men in the face of such demands? Far from it; they have allowed this enervation, and rendered obedience.

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What displeased the Church in regard to the “Christian” trade unions, was not only the fact that the Catholic and Protestant organisations worked in conjunction one with the other, and laid claims to a certain independence in economic movements, but also the fact that same were prepared to resort to strikes if necessary. The Catholic moralist does not repudiate strike action in principle, but describes same as being accompanied by countless dangers for the worker and his family, as well as the community at large. The Church tries rather to dissuade the men from striking, than to forbid them. It is, at any rate, requested that the workers follow the advice of the Church when contemplating any struggle which seems likely to assume serious dimensions. In order to give an idea of the Churches attitude towards the workers’ movement, and especially to strikes, a few passages from the Encyclical relating to Trade Unions previously referred to, are reproduced here:—

“Whatever the Christian does, even in the disposition of earthly matters, the Heavenly treasures must not be lost sight of. He should, rather, do everything according to the principles of the Christian Philosophy, always aiming at the highest of all treasures. All his actions, as far as they conform with the natural and Divine laws or deviate from same, are subject to the judgement of the Church.

Those who individually or collectively profess to be Christians, and who wish to live up to their faith, must not stir up strife or animosity among the different classes of society, but must rather strive for peace and brotherly love.

The social question and those questions, so closely bound up in same, concerning character and times of work, payment of wages, and strikes, are not questions of a merely economic character, and should not, therefore, be counted among those questions which can be settled independent of the Episcopal authorities, but, on the contrary, there is no doubt that the social question is a question of

to cripple every wages movement, and hold the destiny of the German miners in their hands. After careful weighing up of the "pros" and "cons", notice of strike was given on the 10th March. This step was not taken until all possible means of arriving at a settlement of their demands had been exhausted.

Of the 360 000 miners employed in the Rhineland-Westphalian pits, 220 000—most of whom were under-ground workers—soon found themselves on strike. The "Christian" leaders saw that their plans had miscarried and that numerous members of their organisation had taken part in the strike. Then, with an appalling contempt for the truth they held forth upon the atrocities wrought upon those who were willing to work by the strikers. The clerical press excreted blood and thunder stories of the violent treatment to which those willing to work would be subjected, at the hands of the strikers. The sole object of this outcry was that the government might decide to send police and soldiers to intimidate the miners into resuming work. The strike was to be broken by masses of armed men, by the mailed fist, by police and military terrorism. And it was the "Christian" trade unions, headed by Herr Giesberts—a man well known in America—which shrieked for the police and the soldiers, through the press, and incited the armed mass against their fellow workers. The German Government, which is entirely under the influence of the capitalists, and such like sworn enemies of the people, answered the cries of the clerics, and dispatched soldiers and machine guns to the strike district. This frightful display of force had the effect of frightening many of the strikers back to their work, and so the strike had to be declared at an end by the leaders of the movement, after same had lasted ten days. Now why had the "Christian" leaders deported themselves so ignominiously? In 1905 the "Christian" unions had stood by the other unions in a fourteen days strike, honourably, and as men. Why this contemptable betrayal, unparalleled in the history of the German Trade Union Movement, some years later? One reason may be found in the relation of the "Christian" unions to the Church.

These unions had already been compelled to pledge themselves to the Bishops (end 1910) and to the observance of the doctrines of the Church in their economic movements, before the Papal encyclical was sent out. It is no secret that social peace, and abstinence from great economic struggles play the chief role in unions of this category.

Politics also had a great deal to do with the matter. The "Centre" was becoming more and more harrassed by the Social Democratic Party in the Rhineland-Westphalia district, and in order to be in a position to make a stand against same, they were obliged to obtain, by hook or by crook, the support of the liberals at the elections. As the great mine owners belonged to the Liberal Party the "Centre" dared not run foul of same. Herr Giesberts, the "Christian" union leader, has to thank the industrial giants and their "yellow" pigmies for his seat in the Reichstag as member for Essen.

One can easily understand that it is the first wish, in the case of people of this stamp, to keep in with the great Knights of the coal and iron industry. Thirdly there was the Government to be thought of, and it was considered to be rendering same a service, to take up one's stand on the side of the "sanctimonious and order loving" section of the populace. More about this matter will be said in the last article. Certain developments have taken place in the "Christian" unions since the last strike, and the present condition of same is as follows:—

The "Christian" trade unions will not in future associate themselves in any great movements which might have the effect of upsetting the economic equilibrium in the lives of the people, and at the same time place capital in jeopardy. They will—in places where they are strong enough—try to prevent these struggles and will not hesitate to shamefully betray the workers and openly assist in strike breaking. In the case of small stoppages of work where the predominance of the Socialists forces the "Christian" unions to join them, they will make the most possible capital out of such an action, and endeavour to demonstrate that they are workers' organisations. The "Christian" organised labour of Germany is placed upon a level with the "yellow" labour by the whole of the remainder of the workers of Germany.

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The "Christian" trade unions entered upon their existence in great hopes. Founded at a time when everybody had their knife into socialism, behind them the strong "Centre" party, and the still greater power, the Church, possessing a program and fostering a policy calculated to please the bourgeois and those clammering for the extermination of socialism, the leaders of the "Christian" unions felt more than certain of a mighty victory. They pictured themselves already at the head of the German Labour Movement, a body composed chiefly of "Christian" trade unionists, with the socialists dangling helplessly at their heels, thankful for even that small mercy. These hopes have been cruelly dashed to the ground, for things have turned out just the opposite. The pith of the German Labour Movement is the socialist unions with their two and a half million members. Compare this with the "Christian" unions, forsaken and neglected with their paltry 350 000 members. The numerical disparity between the two bodies is an ever increasing one. Where the "Christian" Movement increases by 10 000 members the Socialist Movement increases by 100 000. The German worker has recognised what is wrong with the "Christian" unions. He knows that these unions are in the hands of the reactionary powers—of the natural enemies of the people; the lessons taught by the miners' strike and several other similar experiences have not been in vain. The socialists know full well that the "Christian" unions are veritable hot-beds of strike breakers, and propagators

of foul and contemptible treachery. The more respectable and enlightened portion of the German workers, therefore, give a wide birth to these unions, leaving them to those ill-advised doubly duped and deluded unfortunates, who see in their foes, their friends. It has just dawned upon the "Christian" unions what a miserable role they are playing. This only adds fuel to their rage. Generally speaking, they are not able to get at the socialists' unions, but, unfortunately in the case of certain districts and callings, they are still in a position, on account of their strength, to render possible wages movements very dangerous, as in the case of the miners and the textile workers. As the "Christian" unions have no further chance of making any conquests among the independent workers, their leaders, in order to recover lost ground, have concentrated their attention upon the workers engaged in public services. It is a well known fact that the governments of Prussia, Saxony, and other German states have denied the right of combination to officials and workers engaged in state service, etc., or at least taken special care that state employees shall not belong to any socialist organisation. The "Christian" leaders are after these workers, as the concerns under the control of the State are continually increasing in extent and number, and it would be a good thing to be able to fill up their ranks from this body of workers. For this purpose two things are necessary:—First, the permission of the authorities to organise the workers in public service under the "Christian" unions. In order to gain this end they have renounced all right to strike, which is equivalent to abandoning their right to combination. Secondly, in order that they may be free from competition they want the Government to assist them, by forbidding the employees, as before, to join the socialist unions. The Government is prepared to grant both requests, for which the "Christian" trade unions had to promise to act only in such a manner as would please the Government and conduce to their interests. These two bodies now find themselves shoulder to shoulder with mutual interests and a common aim; that of depriving the German workers of the right to combine, of their right to strike, as well as their free agency in matters pertaining to their economic development. It can be easily understood that the Government are doing their best in Rome to prevent the Pope from forbidding the "Christian" unions, and also why the "Christian" trade union leaders supported the Government in their efforts to smother the strike by means of soldiers and police. The "Christian" trade union leaders belong to the most malicious agitators against the right of combination among the workers in state or public service. Formerly the Bavarian railway worker was at liberty to join what organisation he thought fit. Upon his availing himself of this right by joining the Railway Workers' Union, a union conducted on sound modern trade union principles, along came the leaders of the Bavarian "Centre" Party and denounced this union as social-democratic, demanding

the Bavarian Government to forbid same. The Government resisted this demand for a long time. Upon the leader of the "Centre" Party (Hertling) becoming Prime Minister, the fate of the Railway Union was sealed. He declared that he was driven to forbid the right to strike under pain of the union being dissolved; but this did not help him. The Bavarian Government gave notice that no official or worker employed by the Bavarian Traffic Ministry would in future be allowed to belong to the said Railway Workers' Union, and in order to give full effect to the interdict upon this union, the Government extended same to the Metal Workers' and Transport Workers' Unions; both socialistic organisations. The "Centre" press and the whole army of "Christian" leaders shouted for joy and approbation at this unheard of injustice, through which the Bavarian worker was to be deprived of his rights.

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The "Christian" leaders are at present conducting a fierce campaign of political aggression against those workers whose ideas do not coincide with theirs. One can only imagine that they find themselves in such a bewildering state of confusion, that they can see no other way of saving themselves from being overpowered by the socialists than by means of force. This is, of course, nothing more nor less than a blow in the face for solidarity and proletarian self-consciousness. It goes without saying that this sort of action can avail them nothing. A union which attempts to live on the deprivation of its members of their rights, strike breaking, and the betrayal of the worker, has already sounded its own death knell. The words lately uttered by one of the leaders of the "pure" Catholic organisation admirably apply to these enemies of Labour. "The "Christian" Trade Union Movement is in itself a great lie, and as such, will certainly meet its death at its own hand." The tour undertaken by Giesberts, the Clerical Member of Parliament and leader of the "Christian" trade unions, in America, and the propositions made by this organiser prove that the doctrines of the "Centre", the Catholic Unions, and the "Christian" trade unions are to be exported to America. First there will come the social courses, then the establishing of Catholic and "Christian" trade unions, and Behold!! America revelling under the delightful Dictatorship of the "Clerical Party" even as is the case in Germany. We do not feel ourselves called upon to advise the citizens of the United States, but on account of our experiences in Germany, the home of the "Christian" Trade Union Movement, we feel it our duty to warn America against the Delegation of the "Christian" Trade Unions. The Organisations were established to rend asunder and destroy the Trade Union Movement in this country; they are completely under the thumbs of the greatest enemies of the people, who tolerate and permit their existence only because they are prepared to thwart

the Socialist Movement and stab their fighting fellow workers in the back when a favourable opportunity affords itself. We wish to protect our American brothers from such bitter experiences of the "Christian" trade unions as we have had here in Germany. We therefore advise you to close the door on the "Christian" delegates, politely but firmly.

Number of members. Additional members. Annual income, and total funds, absolute and per member, of the *)Central Federations and Christian Trade Unions during the years 1900, 1905, 1910, 1911.

	Number of members	Increase or Decrease	Total year's income M.	per head M.	Total funds M.	per head M.
1900						
Central Federations	680 427	—	9 454 075	13.89	7 745 901	11.38
Christian Trade Unions	159 770	—	485 546	3 04	51 996	0.33
1905						
Central Federations	1 344 803	+ 664 376	27 812 257	20 68	19 635 850	14.60
Christian Trade Unions	265 032	+ 105 262	2 674 190	10.09	1 523 214	5.75
1910						
Central Federations	2 017 298	+ 672 495	64 372 190	31.91	52 575 505	26.06
Christian Trade Unions	295 129	+ 30 097	5 490 994	18.61	6 113 710	20.72
1911						
Central Federations	2 320 986	+ 303 688	72 086 957	31.06	62 105 821	26.76
Christian Trade Unions	340 957	+ 45 828	6 243 642	18.31	7 082 942	20.77

Sums expended upon strikes and contributed towards the financial assistance of the strikers by the *)Central Federations and the Christian Trade Unions during the years 1905, 1910, 1911.

	Number of members	Legal Protection and Financial Assistance		For lockouts, strikes, and victimised workers	
		Total M.	per head M.	Total M.	per head M.
1905					
Central Federations . . .	1 544 803	3 761 622	2.79	10 160 859	7.55
Christian Trade Unions . .	188 106	173 168	0.92	1 000 320	5.32
1910					
Central Federations . . .	2 017 298	18 704 323	9.27	20 413 343	10.12
Christian Trade Unions . .	295 129	1 154 275	3.91	1 239 500	4.20
1911					
Central Federations . . .	2 320 986	20 478 495	8.82	18 198 847	7.84
Christian Trade Unions . .	340 957	1 243 347	3.65	1 199 598	3.52

Out of work pay of the *)Central Federations and out of work pay and travelling allowances of the Christian Trade Unions during the years 1905, 1910, 1911.

	In organi- sations	Member- ship	Total M.	per head M.
1905				
Central Federations	41	866 000	1 991 924	2.30
Christian Trade Unions	12	120 615	13 571	0.11
1910				
Central Federations	43	1 666 262	6 075 522	3.65
Christian Trade Unions	14	203 116	168 461	0.83
1911				
Central Federations	42	1 922 070	6 340 544	3.30
Christian Trade Unions	16	243 222	185 271	0.76

One Pound sterling = 20.40 M.

One Dollar . . . = 4.20 „

*) „Central” Federations are those Trade union bodies which are organised in the General Commission of Trade Unions, and at the same time affiliated to the International Secretariat. They call themselves the „free” and „politically neutral” Unions; whilst in the capitalist press they are usually referred to as „sozialist” unions.

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